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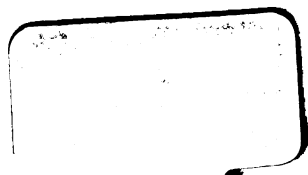
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The Mysteries
of the Rosary.



THE
MYSTERIES OF THE **R**OSARY.

By the Author of
"THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS," "MIRIAM,"
AND OTHER POEMS.

Inscribed to the Memory of
THE RIGHT HON. HENRY VALENTINE, LORD STAFFORD.



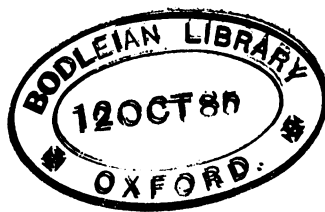
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HENRY VALENTINE,

9th *Baron Stafford.*

BORN JANUARY 2, 1802.

DIED NOVEMBER 30, 1884.

REQUIESCAT IN PACE.

To the Memory of Lord Stafford.

Ye spotless blooms, your snow-white bosoms heave,
The case concealing* which conceals the clay ;
Ye burning climes, your floral pride display ;
Ye winter stars, your inflorescence weave :
Combined by loving hands, be taught to grieve,
With all your peers, in cruciform array,
For him who, while he hailed the light of day,
Was ranked with those who in the Cross believe.

Where this bright token† glows, a loyal band
Approach, and weeping lay their garlands down—
The tenantry, the nobles of the land,
And the first subject of the British Crown.
As last of all, a paler wreath I twine ;
With less of human skill treating a theme divine.

* The coffin was completely concealed by the memorial wreaths and crosses, which covered and surrounded it.

† Lady Stafford's cross, six feet long.

Apology for Delay.

My life is like a many-folded sheet,
And all the lettered seeds which there are sown
Are spread by every hand except my own :
By day and night unbidden guests I meet,
Who chase my musings from their loved retreat :
Some can command (too well their power is known);
Some only plead, but these, intrepid grown,
Usurp the page of life, while I its margin greet.

Ambition, restless in her aim and bold,
This edge to widen, urges fond desire—
To lengthen my discourse with bards of old,
And snatch a gleam from their celestial fire.
Yet some there are, with texts of Scripture stored,
Who cross my path and censure margins broad.*

* Matt. xxiii, 5 : "Dilatant phylacteria sua et magnificent fimbrias." Cf. Deut. vi. 8 ; Num. xv. 38.

The Annunciation.

No. I.

For more than forty times a hundred years
The human intellect, expanding still,
New objects of ambition to the will
Presents incessantly. The distance nears,
And yet perplexing doubts and vexing fears,
Like frost, the bud of hope would nip and kill,
Save for a Child unborn, whose wondrous skill
Controls the conscious and unconscious spheres.

With all the spheres, with spirits there who dwell,
Rapt in suspense we stood, until we heard
That one consenting efficacious word,
Which opens heaven to all, confounding hell.
The Word made flesh my heritage has sealed,
And all my bleeding wounds by that one Word are healed.

The Annunciation.

No. II.

All creatures on this fallen earth repine
For harmony disturbed and beauty lost—
Man most, by strife internal torn and tost ;
His presence all the grazing flocks decline.
They miss the meekness of the seal divine ;
But venom-breeders and the ravenous host
Beset his careless steps on every coast,
Lurk in the forest and the boundless brine.

But lo ! there comes a messenger of light.
One word to him, O Virgin ! of consent
Bitter complaint would turn to sweet content,
And our dull days new suns would render bright.
That word is past, creation hears the voice,
And exiles in the vale of tears rejoice.

The Annunciation.

No. III.

The tender snowflakes, with their threads of light
And varied crystals of prismatic form—
The dearest, meekest elves, though sons of storm ;
The rain arrested by congealing might ;
The arch of day, the meteors of the night ;
The dry, the moist, the tepid, and the warm ;
The wandering orbs, of constancy the norm—
Salute the hour which made creation bright.

In splendid shreds of their primeval dress,
They kiss the edge of the Archangel's rod ;
And taught by man the Virgin's deed to bless,
They hail her Queen of all the works of God :
For well they know her Child from sin and scorn
Has power the world to save, though yet unborn.

The Visitation—The Magnificat.

No. I.

Say not, Withdrawn from every human eye
Are all the future fortunes of our race ;
Say not, Some phantom* (grudging us the grace
Which guards us from our birth until we die)
Pursues our steps, and mars our destiny.
Though seasons fly—though change is lord of space,
Nor lives the man has seen to-morrow's face†—
Our path though thorny, clouded though our sky :
Yet when I hear the Virgin's lofty creed,
A Power with her I praise, for aye which lives ;
Adore the Will which makes the feeble strong—
A crown prepares for right, avenges wrong—
One constant blessing to all ages gives,
From Abraham transmitted through his Seed.

* "O fantôme muet, ô notre ombre, ô notre hôte,
Spectre toujours masqué, qui nous suit côte à côte,
Et qu'on nomme demain !"

From the magnificent poem by Victor Hugo, upon the birth of the King of Rome,
1811. Among the *Chants du Crêpuscule*.

† "O demain, c'est la grande chose !
De quoi demain sera-t-il fait ?
L'homme aujourd'hui sème la cause,
Demain Dieu fait mûrir l'effet."

Ibid.

The Magnificat.

NO. II.

The heart, dilated by a boundless bliss,
Communicates its raptures ; cannot rest
Till all its thoughts, in radiant accents drest,
From strong emotion's fathomless abyss
Blend in one flame the fervent and remiss :
Such the effusions of the Virgin's breast
When Justice, on that day for ever blest,
Sweet Peace embraced in one eternal kiss.

The God whom she conceived inspired her lay,
And bathed her lips in nectar of the sky ;
He heard it first before Creation's day—
Who learn it well for Him will live and die.
With bounding steps she brings her heavenly strains
To proud Judea's heights from Galilean plains.

B

The Nativity.

No. I.

To Bethlehem he traced his weary way,
The son of David, poor and all alone,
Though worthy of his royal father's throne.
"Where shall, who shares my destitution, lay,
When born, the Child whom creatures all obey?"
A stranger, watching, heard his parting moan :
"My domicile is mean ; but make it known
Its threshold may be passed this very day."

Led by her spouse, in lowly guise, he saw
The type of meekness ; but he hailed a Queen :
And now, impressed with some mysterious awe,
He kissed the traces where her feet had been.
Where is that home, in which the Child is born,
Where midnight lamps announce an everlasting morn ?

The Nativity.

No. II.

This hospitable dwelling is the heart,
Which tears have purified from every stain,
Where love is born of expiating pain :
In search of which the Orient sages start,
Led by the rays which from a meteor dart ;
Angelic legions strive with might and main
A station in this humble tent to gain,
Attracted by the Infant's winning art.

Here heat is kindled by the Seraph's fire—
By Cherubim, an intellectual light ;
And Thrones and Princedoms* praise Him on the lyre ;
And Dominations tremble in His sight ;
And through the Virtues, who perform His will,
A million energies for outward action thrill.

* " Under Thee, as head supreme,
Thrones, princedoms, powers, dominions I reduce."

MILTON.

The Nativity.

No. III.

And adumbrated there, of future times
 (Until the ages of the world decay
 Upon the second Resurrection day),
Are all the Saints, the bloom of all the climes,
Who expiated uncommitted crimes—
 Who fell to tyrants' rage an early prey,
 Or treaded Contemplation's longer way,
By Rupert's* wisdom led, and fired by Damian's† rhymes.

All these, coeval with the Virgin's Son,
 Triumphant through His death, no more can die ;
 And, veiled for ever from the carnal eye,
Dwells in their midst the Presence—Three in One.
Vibrating through the soul they swell and sweep,
Uprooting the foundations of its deepest deep.

* Rupert, Abbot of Deutz, a writer who flourished early in the twelfth century. The learning, ingenuity, and high tone of thought displayed in his biblical commentaries led to the belief that his intellectual powers had been enlarged by supernatural agency.

† "Rhythmus S. Petri Damiani de Gloria Paradisi," among the *Proces et Carmina* in the last volume of his works.

The Presentation in the Temple.

No. I.

The garden was a temple of the Lord,
Ere breach of faith engendered sin and vice ;
The Temple now becomes a Paradise,
Where Anna from her widowhood adored,
And Simeon all his wealth of wisdom stored.
Creation's history is acted twice ;
Of manhood's debt a Child has paid the price,
And scattered large Redemption far abroad.

With that primeval pair Jehovah talked ;
Erect in all their strength, with Him they walked
When, at meridian hour, they heard His voice.
But bent are these, who see Emanuel's face—
Infirm and ripe for death, whose crowning grace
In a new Eden makes the four rejoice.

The Presentation in the Temple.

No. II.

It was an aged man who held a Child,
And in the sweetness of its sparkling eyes
Saw all the springs of bliss eternal rise ;
A godlike ray of beauty, when it smiled,
The pains of age and every pain beguiled.
'Tis not the man on whom the Child relies ;
O no ; the Infant (hear it with surprise)
It is who rules that ancient undefiled.

Those blissful moments how will he employ ?
I hear him speak : " Give tears to aged sin :
The hearts which long have strangers been to joy
'Tis Thine, sweet Babe, to soften and to win :
Turn back their steps, Thou Infant Son of God,
And place them on the path which, children, once they
trod." *

* Composed during the sickness of Victor Hugo.

The Fifth Mystery.

PART I.—SEEKING.

When exiles mourned on Babel's sluggish stream,
And hung their harps upon a willow-tree,
The most distressed was rapt in ecstasy,
And saw the Weeks in his prophetic dream—
The glories of the future mystic scheme :
For half a week would walk upon the sea
The Long Desired, and set the captive free ;
Would heal, instruct, the wandering seek, redeem.

O short, but blest, that half a week of years,
When man could follow God in all his ways !
O long, and full of anguish and of fears,
For pilgrims two their half a week of days !
And, day declining, doubly dark the night,
Through absence of the cause of all their light.

The Fifth Mystery.

PART II.—THE FINDING IN THE TEMPLE.

O man of God ! on that unhallowed strand,
Waiting to see the exile years decrease,
When will thy sharp consuming rigours cease ?
'Twas watering with his tears a waste of sand
Until he felt the touch of Gabriel's hand ;
But when the " Strength of God " * restored his peace,
And with his own he saw the world's release,
His heart dilated in that foreign land.

Desponding, unrepining, weary, faint
(To the short fleeting hours grief adding length),
Two pilgrims breathed their low continuous plaint
That He was gone—their life, their joy, their strength :
Their ken was widened when His fane they trod,
For lo ! He there pursued far-reaching plans of God.

* The interpretation of the name of Gabriel.

The Agony in the Garden.

When issued through the gates, from mortal sight
For ever screened, a herald of the King,
And in the liquid rainbow dipt his wing,
The sun as much outshining by his light
As the day-star outshines the stars of night—
What secret balm, to mitigate the sting
Of suffocating anguish, did he bring
In that dark hour, which owned the demon's might ?

He told the Sufferer that, from pole to pole,
By a new race His Father was adored ;
Save the obdurate, every human soul
From error's path to truth should be restored :
And all the contrite, by their vows and tears,
This promise have confirmed "for twice a thousand years."

The Scourging at the Pillar.

Not mine the task to trace with feeble pen
The channels of that expiating blood,
Dilating to a wide outpouring flood,
When, armed with whips, infuriated men
Renewed the scenes of Topheth's grisly den,
While He, the scorned of all, in lenient mood,
That day's last act provided on the Rood ;
Sorrow too deep for reach of mortal ken.

But from this tragic page one lowly scene,
Presented in a suppliant's garb, I take—
That from those wrists, which on the pillar lean,
Some friend of ruth the manacles would shake ;
For who, when the Creator's hands are bound,
Instead of Him shall scatter blessings round ?

The Crowning with Thorns.

Daughters of Sion, see the sparkling crown
Worn by the King upon His bridal day ;
And see the one which, turned from faith away,
Instead of smiles, you gave Him with a frown.
For this the white-robed hosts come flocking down,
And weep for woe, and sing a plaintive lay ;
Each wound adore, and kiss each thorny spray,
And in a stream of tears their anguish drown.

And where their kisses press, behold the train
Of flora's cups expanding to the sky ;
And fragrance issues from this head of pain,
And secret manna from each melting sigh.
His leaf is green, and every blossom blows—
Mount Carmel's head of pride and Sharon's lovely rose.

The Carrying of the Cross.

The will can shorten distance to a span ;
Of inclination energy is born ;
The frozen peaks of Schreck and Matterhorn
Entice the boldness of adventurous man ;
Who, tempted next the Caucasus to scan,
Recks not his risk by tigers to be torn,
Or hurled to depths below, to which the morn
Sent not a single ray since time began.

Only one peak above his reach he deems,
One road too rugged, and one goal too far—
The Cross outstrips his most ambitious schemes :
The Cross, which else might be his polar star.
For glory's self, and more than glory's meed,
It is to bear the Cross, by which the world was freed.

The Crucifixion.

I sing of Phison,* in the land of gold ;
The stream of Tigris† crimson is and bright ;
A new Euphrates‡ beams upon my sight,
And Gehon's circuit§ wider than of old—
A fourfold stream, whose virtue Four|| have told :
One drowns the deeds of darkness and of night ;
In one are born, one heals, the sons of light ;
Broods o'er the fourth the Spirit sevenfold.

A thrust, a wound, a fructifying spring,
To drench the parching world and every shore ;
Your widest urns, ye brides of Haran,¶ bring,
Your thirst and ours to quench for evermore :
For of the five, the most impetuous flood
Is this unfailing stream of water and of blood.

* Gen. ii. 11.

† *Ibid.* ii. 14.

‡ *Ibid.* ii. 14.

§ *Ibid.* ii. 13.

|| The Evangelists.

¶ Gen. xxix. 4 and Gen. xxiv. 10 : Nachor's city, that is Haran.

The Resurrection.

Between the midnight and the Orient star,
Before nocturnal hours their race have run,
Its pearly tissues ere the dawn has spun,
Ascends an orb, and more refulgent far
Than that which rides upon Aurora's car :
To-day we greet two risings of the sun,*
We greet two victories over darkness won,
And bursting of the strong sepulchral bar.

With mirrored rays of this immortal light
Your vision quicken, as it mounts above ;
The darkness deep dispel of error's night,
And dress the lamp of faith with oil of love.
This was His last and most impressive warning,
Pledge of the second Resurrection morning.

* " E di subito parve giorno a giorno
Esser aggiunto, come Quei che puote
Avesse il ciel d' un altro sole adornò,"
DANTE, *Parad.* i. 21.

The resemblance did not occur to me till after the composition.

The Ascension.

Thy death, O death, ascending to the sky,
With varied gifts enriched a triple race ;
With bread of life He strengthens those who trace
Their upward way, while trials multiply,
And hope deferred prolongs its plaintive sigh.
New glories crown the eldest sons of grace,
And those who dwelt in Sheöl see the face
And soar to the abode of the Most High.

This is the birthday of a thrilling joy
For Isaac's father and for Jacob's seed ;
A lance to pierce the heart of fierce Sansloy,
And his two brethren of the paynim creed.
So once, triumphant in his fiery flight,
Elijah vanished from Elisha's sight.

NOTE.—The paynim brethren.

" At last it chanced this proud Sarazin
To meet me wandering. * *

* * * * * * *

There lies he now, with foul dishonour, dead,
Who whiles he lived was called proud Sansfoy,
The eldest of three brethren ; all three bred
Of one bad sire, whose youngest is Sansjoy,
And 'twixt them both was born the bloody bold Sansloy."
SPENSER, *Legend of the Knight of the Red Cross*, canto ii. st. 25.

Descent of the Holy Ghost.

No. I.

While raise the builders their tremendous pile
On strong foundations, and with high disdain
Look up to heaven, nor know they toil in vain,
Mark thou a track from Babel to the Nile—
The lands on which the eyes of morning smile.
The sons of men spread o'er the Memphian plain,
And some by storms are tossed across the main,
And bring strange speech to every distant isle.

Roll back, Dispersion, now roll back thy tide !
The Spirit comes, His nations to collect.
Fly like the sea ; thy face, Confusion, hide ;
Thy prone and palsied sons He makes erect.
What ails thee, Babel ? Bend thy neck of pride ;
One faith, one speech, He brings to His elect.

Descent of the Holy Ghost.

No. II.

The Spirit brooded o'er the boundless deep,
And all its strong conflicting currents fled :
Dry land appeared. And now the sun can shed
A flood of light on plain and slope and steep :
Now waking from their long potential sleep,
The verdant germs a velvet carpet spread.
Hail, gay luxurious life ! Where all was dead
The sparkling sprays of dew through sprays* organic sweep

The Spirit modelled the prophetic ear ;
On Jordan's wave He witnessed with the voice :
In twelve faint hearts He healed the wound of fear,
And sent them forth to bid the world rejoice.
His message fans the flame of their desire ;
The type of His approach are parted tongues of fire.

* The two words—spray from *sprêgan*, to pour, and spray from *spreck*, a small shoot or branch—are more carefully discriminated by Webster than by the author of the *Imperial Dictionary*.

The Assumption.

PART I.—ASPIRATION.

Your first, your last, your constant long desire,
Ye everlasting hills, the Godhead Trine
Brought down from heaven upon the earth to shine,
When I conceived an uncreated fire,
By whose resistless action I aspire
This day to melt the prison where I pine,
And, sailing past the zenith's starry line,
Strike with firm hand the Apocalyptic lyre.

PART II.—INVITATION.

The storms are past, O daughter, lend thy ear ;
The hour is come, O bride, to quit the earth ;
For harps around thy unsubstantial bier
Are strung, to carol thy undying birth.
The Son, who hailed thy plenitude of grace,
Unveils the glory of His Father's face.

The Coronation.

IN THREE PARTS.

SOVEREIGNTY—THE ROYAL ROBE—THE CROWN.

(Apoc. xii. 1.)

"Mulier amicta sole (royal robe), luna sub pedibus ejus (sovereignty), et in capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim" (the universality of the Saints forming the crown of their Queen). Compare Phil. iv. 1 and 1 Thes. ii. 19 : "Fratres mei carissimi et desideratissimi, gaudium meum et corona mea. Quæ est enim nostra corona gloriæ? Nonne vos?"

NO. I.—SOVEREIGNTY.

The stole whose scintillations soft and bright
Assuage the eye is by a hermit spun ;
In oval cell, secluded from the sun,
Creating an impenetrable night,
It lengthens out its thread of glimmering light.
All glorious deeds in silence are begun,
And in the shade unfading crowns are won,
Screened from the noonday glare of men's unhallowed sight.

Descended from a line of ancient kings,
Unknown to fame, my choice was to obey ;
Soaring above the sphere of earthly things,
I gained a queen's immunity and sway.
Nor chance nor change can reach my royal seat ;
Their waxing waning type, the moon, is at my feet.

The Coronation.

NO. II.—THE ROYAL ROBE.

The garment which surrounds my royal state
The Bridegroom is, whose mansion is the sun,
And giant-like delights His race to run.
Part finite is this robe, part increate.
The early sins it frets, it frets the late,
Of Jew and Gentile, Briton, Frank, and Hun.
The weft* is human, by volition spun ;
The warp† to praise, what lips are adequate ?

One thread controls, with unresisted Might,
The deep abyss, the vast expanse above ;
One thread is Wisdom's all-pervading light ;
The third, ineffable unbounded Love.
This robe I wear, invoke this triple Name,
That all its spreading floods may quench Gehenna's flame.

* The horizontal threads, representing the human nature and the human will.

† The vertical threads, which cross the former, representing the divine nature and attributes.

The Coronation.

NO. III.—THE CROWN.

The bright and burning treasures of the mine,
The paler pride that floats the waves between,
The pearl* contrived an aching wound to screen,
Arcturus imaged in the placid brine,
Adorn my crown far less than twelve* and nine.†
Ere touched my infant feet the pastures green,
The nine their splendour spread through the serene ;
Twelve issue from the patriarchal line.

They live, they breathe, and on the elysian plain
Unfold their merit in their Maker's sight,
More free and glorious than the soaring train,
With crimson plumage and with wings of light.
These souls exulting in my chaplet shine,
And one of these is Henry Valentine.

St. Valentine's Day, 14th February 1885.

* Siebold on the pathological origin of the pearl.

† The number twelve, frequently employed in Scripture to denote the universality of the human race.

‡ The angels.

